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WAR CABINET.

RED ARMY DAY 1944.

MEMORANDUM BY THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION.

THE Ministry of Information has now had an opportunity of working out detailed proposals for the celebration of Red Army Day on the 23rd February, and of consulting the other Departments likely to be concerned. It will be recalled that on the 29th November, 1943 (W.M. (43) 163rd Conclusions, Item 3), the War Cabinet decided that it wished to have official celebrations of this day, though on a less elaborate scale than last year.

The following arrangements are now being made :—

1. Official action is to be confined to London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast. This will mean that troops are not lent or other forms of Government recognition or assistance given to ceremonies outside those cities or to ceremonies in those cities other than the official ones.

2. *London*.—Considering the time of the year and the practical impossibility of combining a parade outside the Albert Hall with a ceremony in the Albert Hall, we have to concentrate on a meeting in the Albert Hall. The programme will consist simply of music by massed bands, choirs and orchestra, with an invited audience picked to represent each section of the British people. The meeting is intended to last for about an hour and three-quarters and to include a single speech in honour of the Red Army, which the Home Secretary has agreed to deliver.

3. *Edinburgh and Cardiff*.—There is to be a ceremony in each city on somewhat the same lines, subject to local variations but with the guarantee of a leading spokesman on behalf of the Government. The Secretary of State for Air has promised to speak at Edinburgh and I am in course of arranging for a speaker at Cardiff. According to the advice that I have received, large-scale parades on such an occasion would not be well taken, at any rate in the absence of any corresponding official recognition of the achievements of our own fighting forces during the last year.

4. *Belfast*.—By local agreement a parade is being organised at which the First Lord of the Admiralty will take the salute, but no meeting is contemplated.

B. B.

Ministry of Information,
4th February, 1944.